

Dear Members of the FCC,

My name is Douglas Loudenslager, and I serve as chief operating officer for the National

FFA Organization and National FFA Foundation. I would like to provide comment for your

inquiry regarding RFD-TV, reference number MB 06-92.

As you may know, the FFA is an organization for students in public schools preparing for

careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. Formerly known as

"Future Farmers of America," the FFA is one of three vital components of a total agricultural

science education system that helps develop students' potential for leadership, personal

growth and career success in the food, fiber and natural resources systems of agriculture.

There are approximately a half-million FFA members in 7,200 school-based chapters in 50

states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The FFA operates as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit

organization and received a charter from the U.S. Congress in 1950.

Since its inception, RFD-TV has been an important partner for FFA and

agricultural

education, providing an indispensable channel of communication and making available

extensive broadcast production support. RFD-TV airs our educational programming at no

cost to the organization. Through their efforts, FFA has been able to telecast hundreds

of hours of live and taped portions of our past three national FFA conventions held

annually in the fall. These conventions, the largest annual student gatherings in the

country, are attended by some 53,000 individuals each year. Thanks to RFD-TV's coverage,

we are able to share the important educational and motivational content with millions of

current and former members, educators, supporters and the general public.

In addition to the national FFA conventions, RFD-TV made it possible for FFA to develop a

monthly, hour-long program, now titled "FFA Today!" which helps share important information

about the work of agricultural education and the achievements of our members, teachers and

chapters. This program has been an outstanding success and is highly valued by our

FFA-related audiences and the general public. Promoting agriculture, raising awareness of

agricultural science education and developing grassroots support for our teachers and

school programs are all direct results of the support FFA has received-at no cost-through

the generous support of RFD-TV.

Lastly, when the southern coastal states were ravaged by a succession of three hurricanes

last summer beginning with Katrina, RFD-TV played a pivotal role in helping FFA with

"Seeds of Hope," a campaign to raise precious funds to help rebuild agricultural education

programs devastated in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. In addition to

airing our public service announcements, RFD-TV's management contributed \$100,000 to this

effort through the National FFA Foundation, and another \$50,000 was contributed from the

RFD-TV viewing audience. We deeply appreciate the support FFA has received from RFD-TV

President Patrick Gottsch, his organization and the network's viewers.

Agricultural education and FFA are playing a vital role for our nation, not just in

developing tomorrow's agricultural workforce, but in cultivating the leadership abilities

of local citizens who will contribute to the social, economic and civic well-being of the

nation's communities. RFD-TV's help in communicating with our constituencies will be

increasingly important in the future. To be sure, our broadcasting efforts would not be

possible today without the committed support we receive from RFD-TV. To date, no other

broadcasting or publishing entity-either agricultural or general media-has offered this

unqualified support to the National FFA Organization. We are grateful for their efforts.

On behalf of agricultural educators across the nation, I want to thank the FCC for its

vision and foresight in establishing the DBS set-aside requirement that made RFD-TV, and

serving rural education through satellite television, possible. We urge that RFD-TV be

allowed to continue serving American public education and local communities by making

available important programming such as ours that benefits both

agriculture and education.

Thank you for this opportunity to add comment to your inquiry. If the National FFA

Organization can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Douglas Loudenslager

Chief Operating Officer

National FFA Organization

National FFA Foundation

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dloudenslager@ffa.org<o:p></o:p></span></font></p>

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